

APPENDIX N

SUPERIMPOSITION

On rare occasions, a conclusive identification cannot be made because recorded information is insufficient. This applies principally to personnel whose records, being carried at time of death, have been lost or destroyed, and also for nonmilitary casualties that are without benefit of military health and dental records. Such cases can usually be resolved by matching a life-portrait photograph with a similar one taken of the decedent. The head of the viewable, or skeletal, remains is first photographed from the same angle used for the original portrait, and both comparison photographs are then reproduced to

equal size. A negative, or overlay tracing, prepared from one of the photographs, can now be superimposed on the other for direct comparison. All surfaces, contours, orifices, and relative measurements will match if the photographs represent the same individual. It is especially effective if the subject was smiling and exposing several teeth in the original photograph. Enlarged views of these teeth— for comparison as to size, spacings, alinements, beveling, chipping, rotation, and overlap— are convincing factors in establishing identity.